

Tims Ford Reservoir Regional Overview

The Past

Franklin County was created by an Act of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee on December 3, 1807. Coffee County was extracted from Franklin County in 1836, and Grundy County was further divided from Coffee County in 1844. A part of Moore County was formed from Franklin County in 1871.

Franklin County—Before the organization of Franklin County, a portion of its territory lay in what was then called White County. The area that became Franklin County was included in the Dearborn Treaty on January 7, 1806, at Washington City. It was proclaimed by President Thomas Jefferson on May 23, 1807. As a result of this treaty, the Cherokees relinquished to the United States an extensive tract, lying in Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. At approximately this same time, all of the counties in the area came into existence. The early courthouse records were lost or destroyed during the Civil War, and consequently no account of the first election of magistrates and county officers exist. It is certain, however, that the election was held in 1808, and the first county court organized at the home of Major William Russell.

The Act further provided that the town should be named Winchester, with Franklin being the county seat. The town was named “Winchester” after General James Winchester of Sumner County. On February 10, 1812, twenty-six acres of land were purchased on which to locate the town. The first courthouse and jail were erected soon after the purchase of the land. The jail was destroyed by fire in 1813. The courthouse was completed in 1814 and used until 1839, when it was rebuilt. The Old Jail Museum was constructed in 1897.

Winchester was to become an important town on the long stagecoach road extending from Nashville to the settlements in Alabama. The first road through Franklin County was opened in 1806 and ran from east to west across Tennessee. It began in Albany, Kentucky, and passed through towns later named Livingston, Cookeville, McMinnville, Viola, Hillsboro, Winchester and Salem. It intersected the Nickajack Road near Hillsboro.

Mineral springs are abundant in this area, the most noted of which are Hurricane Springs, Estill Springs, and Winchester Springs. Winchester Springs is a noted summer resort, where thousands of pleasure-seekers make their annual visits. There are also many noted cave springs which furnish pure free-stone water.

There is an extensive marble bed within the Elk River watershed, commencing about 5 miles below Winchester, and extending down the river 10 miles and 5 miles on either side. The marble is of excellent quality and consists of gray and red, clouded with green porphyry and various shades. This vast mine of wealth has only been slightly developed. Coal exists in

great quantities near University Place, and at Anderson, Keith's Spring, Maxwell, and other points, however it has not been extensively mined.

Davey Crockett spent many years in Franklin County. After Crockett married Mary "Polly" Finlay in 1806, they decided to settle on the Duck and Elk Rivers. Crockett stayed in Franklin County until the close of the Civil War. His homeplace in Franklin County was named "Kentuck" and is marked by a well standing in a field. The marker is on U.S. 64 at the road junction, 3.3 miles west of Belvidere, Franklin County. Polly died in 1815 and is buried in the Polly Crockett Cemetery in Franklin County. The Davey Crockett Highway leads to historic Falls Mill, which was built in 1873.

The first grist mill in the southern part of Franklin County was built by George Stovall around 1810. As early as 1815, over a dozen cotton-gins were in existence. Even at this early date, Franklin County was one of the leading cotton-producing counties of the state. The cotton was shipped from the Elk River on flat boats, via the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans.

The Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad was completed through the county in 1851. It has stations within the county, at Estill Springs, Decherd, Cowan, Sherwood, and Anderson. Decherd is situated along the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad, at the junction of the Decherd & Fayetteville Railroad, and two miles from Winchester.

The first newspaper published in the county was The Highlander which was established in 1839 at Winchester. It was followed by The Winchester Independent, which was established in 1850. The Franklin County News was established in June 1883.

The number of farms in Franklin County have slightly decreased from 1,155 farms operated on 148,251 acres in 1982, to 1,022 farms operated on 135,469 acres in 1992. Inventory for cattle and calves slightly decreased from 34,057 head in 1982, to 33,817 head in 1992. Poultry increased from 2,433,883 broilers in 1982, to 5,365,867 broilers in 1992. Cropland acres have slightly decreased from 99,853 acres in 1982, to 97,183 acres in 1992.

Moore County—An act of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee was passed on 14 December 1871 to establish Moore County. It was formed from Bedford, Franklin, and Lincoln Counties and was named in honor of Major General William Moore, a Kentuckian who settled in Tennessee in 1808. The county seat of Lynchburg was formerly part of Lincoln County. Thomas Roundtree, was the original proprietor of the land on which the town is located and designed the town in 1818. In December 1883, a fire consumed a large portion of the town. Other towns in Moore County include Marble Hill, Liberty Hill, Hickory Hill, Bakertown, Ridgeville, Pleasant Hill, Raysville, County Line, Booneville, and Lois.

The first newspaper, the Moore County Pioneer, was operated from 1872 until 1874. In April 1874, the Lynchburg Sentinel was established and was subsequently burned in the fire of 1883. The Lynchburg Falcon was first published in February 1884.

Motlow Community College, located on 187 acres of land donated by State Senator Reagor Motlow and family, opened in September 1969. Motlow College is located approximately four miles from Tullahoma.

The number of farms in Moore County have slightly decreased from 472 farms operated on 61,607 acres in 1982, to 359 farms operated on 48,098 acres in 1992. The inventory of cattle and calves in Moore County decreased from 24,573 head in 1982 to 12,050 head in 1992. Poultry on the other hand increased from 424,160 broilers in 1987 (data was withheld for 1982) to 655,300 broilers in 1992. Cropland acres have decreased from 11,151 acres in 1982 to 9,394 acres in 1992.

The Project

Tims Ford Dam is a multipurpose project that added to the orderly development of the Tennessee River system of dams and reservoirs. These dams and reservoirs were part of a bold plan for the unified development of the Tennessee River system recommended to Congress by TVA in 1936.

The proposed system would include nine main-river, multipurpose dams and three or more tributary storage dams. The system would contribute substantially to the control of floods on the Tennessee, lower Ohio, and lower Mississippi Rivers and provide many related benefits, including a large supply of electric power.

Tims Ford Dam was named from an early ford crossing the Elk River near Winchester. The ford was on or near land owned by Abner Mansfield Tims, an early Franklin County settler. The ford was used until about 1885 when the Tims Ford Bridge was constructed across the river.

Tims Ford Reservoir is a 10,680-acre impoundment on the Elk River at Mile 133.3 in Franklin and Moore Counties, Tennessee. Tims Ford Reservoir was completed in 1970 by TVA for the purposes of flood control, hydroelectric generation, recreation, and economic development.

The reservoir is 34 miles long at full pool and has a surface area of 10,680 acres. Water depth at the dam is 143 feet and the average depth is about 50 feet. Average annual discharges from Tims Ford Dam are about 940 cubic feet per second, resulting in a hydraulic residence time of about 280 days. Tims Ford Reservoir is designed for a useful controlled drawdown of 30 feet from 895 feet to 865 feet mean sea level for flood protection. Annual drawdowns average about 18 feet. Normal winter reservoir levels range from 865 to 873 feet, and normal summer levels are 883 to 888 feet. Maximum level is 895 feet. The hydroelectric plant has

two units: a generating unit rated at 45,000 kilowatts, 3,890 cubic feet per second (cfs), and a minimum flow unit rated at 39 kW, 74 cfs.

The Present Shoreland

Today there are approximately 6,453 acres of Tims Ford Reservoir shoreland on which this project can plan future uses (above the 895-foot contour). TVA owns approximately 1,854 acres (above the 895-foot contour) and the balance of 4,599 acres are controlled by TDEC. This land includes about 220 miles of the total 275 miles of shoreline. The existing shoreline supports 51 developed subdivisions (TERDA and private) with the landrights to request private water-use facilities to the lake providing residential access fronting approximately 52 miles of shoreline. There are 13 areas which have a history of receiving residential access over public land to the shoreline through an annual permitting process. This constitutes approximately 1.7 miles of shoreline.

Tims Ford State Park, located on the Elk River and Lost Creek, contains approximately 1,680 acres (38 miles of shoreline), 20 public cabins, 50 campsites with tables, grills, and electrical and water hookups. A lakeside picnic area has 50 individual tables and grills plus two picnic shelters with fireplaces. Restrooms are provided on a playfield located nearby. The park operates a marina which provides equipment and supplies for boating and fishing, a boat launching ramp and dock, and rental boats. The marina also includes a snack bar, bait shop, and fish cleaning area. A double L-shaped swimming pool, one of the largest in the Tennessee State Park system, features a 12-foot diving pool, children's wading pool, bathhouse, and concession stand. There are five miles of paved trails for the hiker and cyclist to explore. Approximately 642,000 visitors came to the park in 1998. An 18-hole golf course, Bear Trace, opened in July 1999 which includes a pro shop and driving range. Two municipal parks on Tims Ford Reservoir property are Winchester City Park and Estill Springs Park. Seven public boat launching facilities and the Devil's Step Campground are also operated for public use. Two private marinas provide personal boat storage.

The Future

Environmental quality issues have become increasingly important as population and demands on the environment increase. Tims Ford Lake is not a high industrial-use lake. Light industries exist from Winchester Industrial Park and private businesses near the municipalities. Agricultural impacts due to runoff containing commercial fertilizer, animal manure, and pesticides are greatest where slopes are greater than three percent and where agricultural operations are immediately adjacent to water bodies. Highways, especially those close to or crossing waterways, impact water quality due to storm water runoff. Capital investments in municipal and industrial wastewater treatment processes, since the adoption of the Clean Water Act in 1972, have resulted in significant improvements in the quality of point-source discharges into waterways and, in turn, have reduced water pollution. As growth continues, further improvements will be necessary.

Tims Ford Reservoir is a unique resource that can be enjoyed by many future generations. However, for it to be enjoyed in the future, it must be able to accommodate increased demands that are placed upon it, or some of those demands must be curtailed. How Tims Ford Reservoir can best accommodate these increased demands will depend on the actions of government, business and civic leaders within the region, those who come to enjoy Tims Ford Reservoir for varying purposes, and those who own land on or near its shoreline.

The future of Tims Ford Reservoir will be affected by trends and issues that extend far beyond its shoreline. Population growth, land development and community planning practices, a growing tourism and recreation economy, a growing diversity of recreational pursuits, as well as developments in upstream portions of the lower Elk River watershed will all affect the quality of experience Tims Ford Reservoir provides. Close attention must be given to reserving shorelands with unique or special qualities, properly managing and conserving the natural resources of the shoreline, and protecting different uses so they can be enjoyed by the public.